

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1                   1.       A method for conducting purchase transactions between a buyer and a  
2 set of suppliers through a portal over the Internet, the method comprising:  
3                   performing a web search for suppliers of a product or service through the  
4 portal;  
5                   displaying, through the portal, a list of matching suppliers located in the web  
6 search;  
7                   displaying, through the portal, web sites of suppliers selected by the buyer  
8 from the list of matching suppliers;  
9                   providing, through the portal, a structured form that allows the buyer to enter  
10 data from the web sites of the selected suppliers;  
11                  providing, through the portal, structured forms that allow the selected  
12 suppliers to enter data; and  
13                  storing the data entered into the structured forms by the buyer and the selected  
14 suppliers in the database.

1                   2.       The method of claim 1 wherein the structured forms allow the selected  
2 suppliers to change the data entered by the buyer.

1                   3.       The method of claim 2 further comprising:  
2 transmitting notification messages to the selected suppliers;  
3 displaying the data entered by the buyer to the selected suppliers;  
4 displaying the data entered by the selected suppliers to the buyer;  
5 displaying a structured form that allows the buyer to enter data in response to  
6 the data entered by one of the selected suppliers; and  
7 storing the data entered by the buyer in response to the data entered by the one  
8 selected supplier in the database.

1                   4.       The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
2 generating a report by analyzing the data stored in the database; and  
3 displaying the report to the buyer.

1                   5.       The method of claim 1 wherein the data entered by the buyer includes  
2 a request for a price quote, and the data entered by the selected suppliers includes a response  
3 to the request for the price quote.

1                   6.       The method of claim 1 wherein the data entered by the buyer includes  
2 a purchase order.

1                   7.       The method of claim 1 wherein performing the search for suppliers  
2 further comprises:  
3                   searching through a private community of suppliers selected by the buyer.

1                   8.       The method of claim 1 wherein performing the search for suppliers  
2 further comprises:  
3                   searching a directory of suppliers that have been pre-qualified.

1                   9.       The method of claim 1 wherein performing the search for suppliers  
2 further comprises:  
3                   conducting an open search of the Internet using the Internet portal to locate a  
4 supplier that matches the search criteria.

1                   10.      The method of claim 1 wherein performing the search for suppliers  
2 further comprises:  
3                   searching through the Internet using search criteria that has been pre-selected  
4 to locate suppliers within a specific industry.

1                   11.      A computer program product for conducting purchase transactions  
2 between a buyer and suppliers through an Internet portal, the computer program product  
3 comprising:

4                   code for performing a web search for suppliers using search criteria;  
5                   code for displaying, through the Internet portal, a list of suppliers located  
6 during the web search that match the search criteria;

7                   code for displaying, through the Internet portal, a web site of a supplier  
8 selected by the buyer from the list of suppliers;

9                   code for displaying, through the Internet portal, a structured form that allows  
10 the buyer to enter data displayed on the web site of the selected supplier;

11                  code for displaying, through the Internet portal, a structured form that allows  
12 the selected supplier to enter data in response to data entered by the buyer;

13                  code for storing the data entered by the buyer and the selected supplier in a  
14 database; and

15 a computer readable medium for storing the codes.

1 12. The computer program product according to claim 11 wherein the code  
2 for displaying the web site of the selected supplier simultaneously displays the web site with  
3 the structured form on a display screen to the buyer.

1 13. The computer program product according to claim 11 further  
2 comprising:  
3 code for transmitting notification messages to the selected supplier;  
4 code for displaying the data entered by the buyer to the selected supplier; and  
5 code for displaying the data entered by the selected supplier to the buyer.

1 14. The computer program product according to claim 13 further  
2 comprising:  
3 code for displaying, through the Internet portal, a structured form that allows  
4 the buyer to enter data responsive to the data entered by the selected supplier;  
5 code for storing the data entered by the buyer in the database; and  
6 code for displaying the data entered by the buyer to the selected supplier.

1 15. The computer program product according to claim 11 wherein the  
2 structured form allows the selected supplier to enter price data, which is stored in the  
3 database; and  
4 the computer program product further comprises code for generating a report  
5 based on the price data entered by a plurality of suppliers.

1 16. The computer program product according to claim 11 wherein the code  
2 for performing the search for suppliers using the search criteria further comprises code for  
3 performing a structured search through a private community of suppliers selected by the  
4 buyer.

1 17. The computer program product according to claim 11 wherein the code  
2 for performing the search for suppliers using the search criteria further comprises searching a  
3 directory of pre-qualified suppliers.

1                   18.     The computer program product according to claim 11 wherein the code  
2     for performing the search for suppliers using the search criteria further comprises conducting  
3     an unstructured search of the Internet using the search criteria.

1                   19.     The computer program product according to claim 11 further  
2     comprising:  
3                   code for transmitting a purchase order from the buyer to an MRP system of the  
4     selected supplier; and  
5                   code for transmitting a delivery date and a price from the selected supplier's  
6     MRP system to an MRP system of the buyer.

1                   20.     The computer program product according to claim 11 further  
2     comprising:  
3                   code for displaying a buyer's request for a price quote to the selected supplier;  
4     and  
5                   code for displaying a price entered by the selected supplier into the structured  
6     form to the buyer.